

Recensiones bibliográficas

Carmelo Luis Martines. *El remanente fiel: Un debate contemporáneo* (The Faithful Remnant: A Contemporary Debate). Libertador San Martín, Argentina: Editorial Universidad Adventista del Plata, 2014. xii+249 pp. ISBN: 978-987-1378-30-2. Paper, US\$20.00

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This work is adapted from his doctoral dissertation defended in 2002 under the title “El concepto de remanente en la Iglesia Adventista del Séptimo Día: Razones subyacentes en el debate contemporáneo” (The Remnant Concept in the Seventh-day Adventist Church: Underlying Reasons in the Contemporary Debate). Having a “bibliographical-historical”, systematic-descriptive” and “analytical-evaluative” character (7, 8); it consists of 6 chapters –besides its extensive bibliography and authors index– that are presented as follows:

The first and last chapters bring something common in this type of work. While in the first a background of the problem regarding the remnant concept in the Adventist Church and the study limits are presented, the second offers an overview, conclusions, and ends with recommendations for further studies.

The second chapter, “El ‘remanente’ en las Escrituras” (The ‘remnant’ in the Scriptures), makes an exhaustive analysis starting with the Old Testament, the Apocrypha, the Pseudepigrapha books, the Qumran documents, and Rabbinism; then, it reviews the New Testament, emphasizing a key verse that has given the Adventist Church its identity, Revelation 12:17 (42-44).

The third chapter “El ‘remanente’ según los pioneros de la Iglesia Adventista” (The ‘remnant’ according to the SDA pioneers) focuses on three key objectives: (1) to see what were the biblical concepts of “remnant”

that the pioneers of Adventism took into account; (2) to examine how they understood it; and (3) to specify what were their reasons or theological starting points (51). This is done through a historical review on the Millerite movement, in the Adventist pioneers, and finally in the important role played by Ellen White for the definition of the “remnant” (63-69).

The fourth chapter “Razones teológicas subyacentes en las posiciones tradicional y de desarrollo con respecto al ‘remanente’” (Underlying reasons in traditional theological positions and of development regarding the ‘remnant’) is divided into two parts. The first is characterized by reiterating “the position of the pioneers on the remnant” (76), and also shows the linkage of the remnant with the prophetic gift (81), i.e., Ellen White’s ministry (84). The second is classified into nine sections which must highlighted because Martines notes that “from the 1950s, the Adventist theology is in a situation of tension” (126) due to a spirit of critical review of our distinctive doctrines. Additionally, Martines is clear in stating that both positions do not disagree because the development position has “the merit of extending its biblical basis for understanding the remnant’s nature and mission, beyond the mere proof texts used by the traditional position” (129).

The fifth chapter “El ‘remanente’ y las razones teológicas que fundamentan las posiciones de cambio y de rechazo” (The ‘remnant’ and theological reasons underlying the shift and rejection positions) is also divided into two. The first part exposes leading exponent that support the shift position—Jack W. Provonsha, Charles W. Teel, Roy Branson, Charles Scriven, Bruce Moyer, Stephan Paul Mitchell and Michael Pearson— showing that “there is an underlying theological reason in all of the authors proposals for the position change, namely, a hermeneutic approach based on the historical-critical method to investigate the Bible and the socio-political resources to critique and evaluate Adventism” (163). In the second part, Martines consider three most prominent exponents supporting the idea of rejecting the Adventist Church as the remnant. These are: Daniel G. Smith, Ingemar Lindén Daily and Steven Gerald (164). Again, Martines evaluates the arguments of each one of them and concluded that “the authors of the rejecting position evidence as primary theological reason the use of a hermeneutics based on external resources to the Bible, as the historical-critical method and historical and social studies” (173).

Although it would have been nice that this work were an updated version with recent works that have been done on ecclesiology within the Adventist

Church,¹ we cannot despise it. Instead, Martines should be commended for an excellent job exploring the concept of “remnant” through a thorough systematic analysis from the beginnings of the SDAC to the present day, including in the Scriptures. Further, the summaries presented at each chapter allow a quick comparison of the differing viewpoints one can have regarding the remnant, confirming that, within Adventist circles, the traditional belief that the SDA church is the end-time remnant people has been questioned, even abandoned, basically for hermeneutical issues (177, 184).²

Any person committed to the Church’s message and mission, a layperson, Church administrator, or Bible teacher cannot miss reading this exciting work that has been recognized—in its doctoral dissertation version—as a contribution to the Adventist ecclesiology.³ For now, only those who can read Spanish will be benefited from this work, written in a simple and entertaining language. However, I must express my joy that we will soon have its English version so to extend its influence and usefulness far beyond the Spanish-speaking world.

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¹ See e.g., Ángel Manuel Rodríguez, ed., *Toward a Theology of the Remnant* (Silver Spring, MD: Biblical Research Institute, 2009); idem, *Message, Mission and Unity of the Church* (Silver Spring, MD: Biblical Research Institute, 2013).

² Similarly Canale has pointed out that. See Fernando Canale, “Hermenéutica, Teología y Remanente,” in *Pensar la iglesia hoy: Hacia una eclesiología adventista*, Estudios teológicos presentados durante el IV Simposio Bíblico-Teológico Sudamericano en honor a Raoul Dederen, eds. Gerald A. Klingbeil, Martín G. Klingbeil y Miguel Ángel Núñez (Libertador San Martín, Argentina: Editorial Universidad Adventista del Plata, 2002), 175; idem, “The Message and the Mission of the Remnant: A Methodological Approach,” in *Message, Mission and Unity of the Church* edited by Ángel Manuel Rodríguez (Silver Spring, MD: Biblical Research Institute, 2013), 261-286.

³ Gerald A. Klingbeil, “Ecclesiology in Seventh-Day Adventist Theological Research, 1995-2004: A Brief Introduction and Bibliographical Guide”, *Andrews University Seminary Studies* 43/1 (2005): 20, hereafter AUSS; Frank M. Hasel, “The Remnant in Contemporary Adventist Theology,” in *Toward a Theology of the Remnant*, 164; and Stefan Hoschele, “The Remnant Concept in Early Adventism: From Apocalyptic Antisectarianism to an Eschatological Denominational Ecclesiology,” *AUSS* 51/2 (2013): 270, 271.